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Course"; and the difficult scientific problem, "The Orchestra," with the illuminated stage beyond; a Renoir, with its beautiful black-and-white, and solid flesh; Twachtman's "Hemlock Pool," in the same room; a group of Homer's marines, especially the "High Cliff," almost overpowering in its swing and intensity, and ten Whistler's, including "The Nocturne, Bognor," with the boats stealthily slipping through the water, and the "Falling Rocket," with its trail of sparks, whose wavering fall is drawn so mysteriously.

Not that these are all—there was scarcely an unworthy picture in the whole exhibition. These are only what I remember best after several visits. But these criticisms, whether of name or pictures, are superficial considerations. Whatever weakness we might discover in contemporary art springs from a fault that lies deep in our modern life. We are too sophisticated, too epicurean; lacking in enthusiasms, bias, and prejudices. We walk too near the sterile plains of eclecticism; defer too much to established codes, and dare not brave criticism and seize the infinite possibilities that surround us. "For Truth and Beauty are as indigenous in Massachusetts as in Tuscany or the Isles of Greece."

PAUL DOUGHERTY.



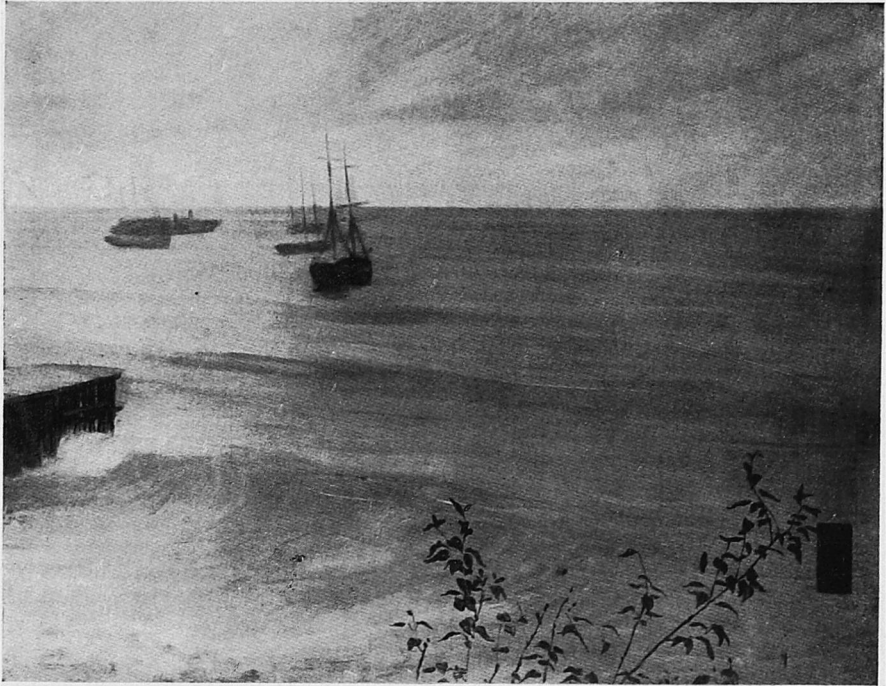
## AMERICANISM IN ART

If there was a distinctively American note in the pictures of native origin at the Comparative Exhibition lately at the Fine Arts Building, New York, it was not easily isolated by the average visitor. This was in one way disappointing, for unless such a show as this is to reveal the master key to the American art-creating temperament, how shall it be discovered?

The truth seems to be that painters on this side of the Atlantic are as diverse in aim and in expression as any other class of their fellow-citizens. Neither literature nor the drama has yet succeeded in producing a composite type of man or woman in which all Americans might feel they were at least in part embodied. The thing has come near accomplishment in England (is not Colonel Newcome the accepted national figure?), while in France the distinctive qualities might be contained in perhaps two or three personages, one of them a Midi character of Alphonse Daudet.

But in America—I am quoting my own words, by courtesy of the New York Mail and Express—crystallization has not fully taken place. The European influence, whether of direct derivation or of tradition, is still overwhelmingly strong in our art. Disregard such explicable similarity in point of view as you might see between, say, William Morris Hunt's "Jewess" and the half-length "Le Petit Gill" of Couture, who was Hunt's teacher in Paris in the early '50's; put

aside the rather obvious coincidence of thought and expression between H. W. Ranger's "Noank" and the Turner canvas, which hung near by, and which happened to be an uncommonly handsome one, of Venice; forget the negligible originality of W. Gedney Bunce's Venice pictures—which never could have existed unless Turner had piloted the way—overlook these and seek more subtle and indirect indebtedness to the art of Europe in this exhibition.



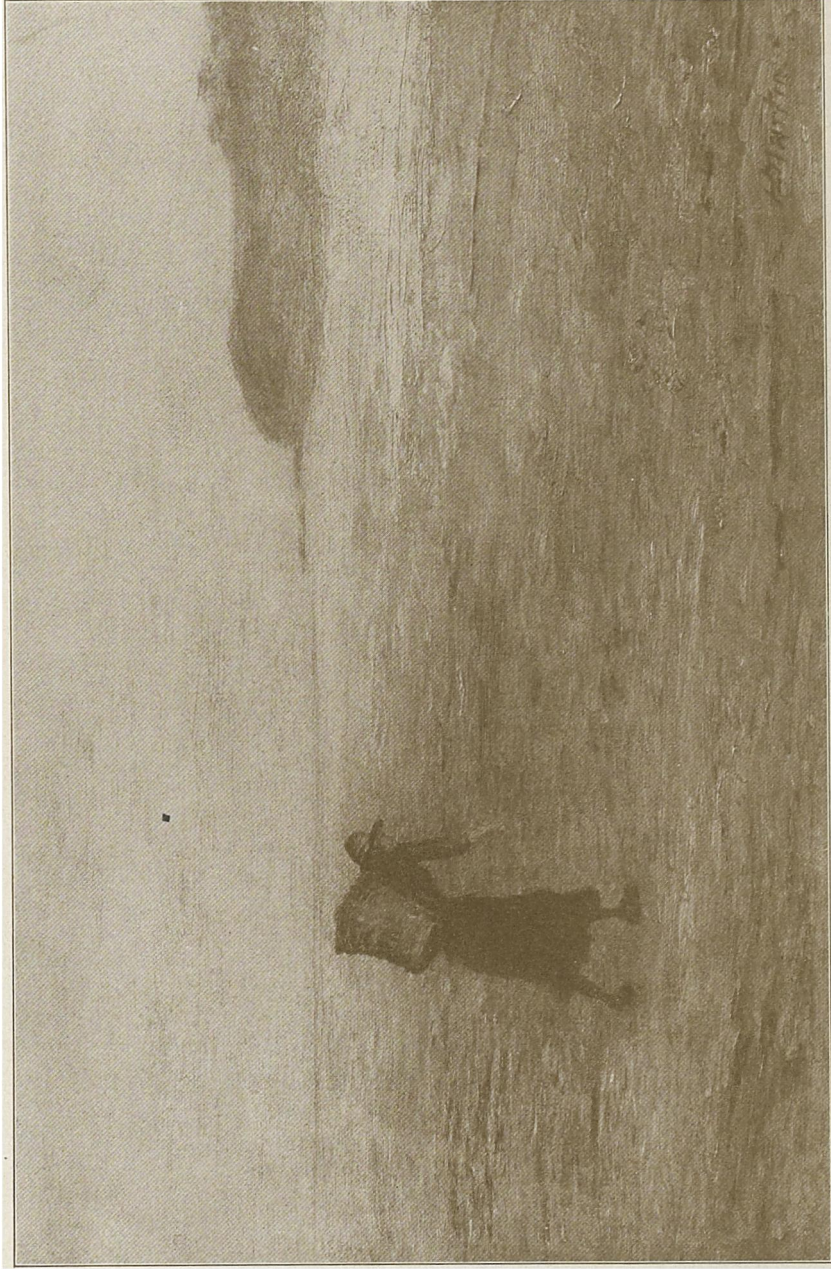
SYMPHONY IN GRAY AND GREEN—THE OCEAN

By J. McNeill Whistler

Loaned by Richard A. Canfield

Look for it, sympathetically (for it is perfectly legitimate, if the American add enough new thought to make the manner his own), in Inness's "The Wood-Gatherers," one of his ripest performances, painted in 1891. Near it hung a Corot. The younger man had something to say that could best be uttered in a new form of the Corot idiom. What he said was worth while, and "The Wood-Gatherers" sounded a distinct and personal note; it was, in fact, the only first rate Inness in the show.

Look upon R. A. Blakelock's "Sunset, Nevarra Ridge," suffused with burning yellows and hot browns; it was no doubt authentic, for in California anything is possible, but could this, could certain other



**GOLDEN SANDS**

By Homer Martin

From "Homer Martin: A Reminiscence," by Permission of William Macbeth



Blakelocks not in the exhibition, have sounded their luscious color harmonies had not Adolphe Monticelli first set the strings a-tremble? On the next wall you might see a noble "Don Quixote" of Monticelli to prove it. This is in no sense a reflection on American painters.

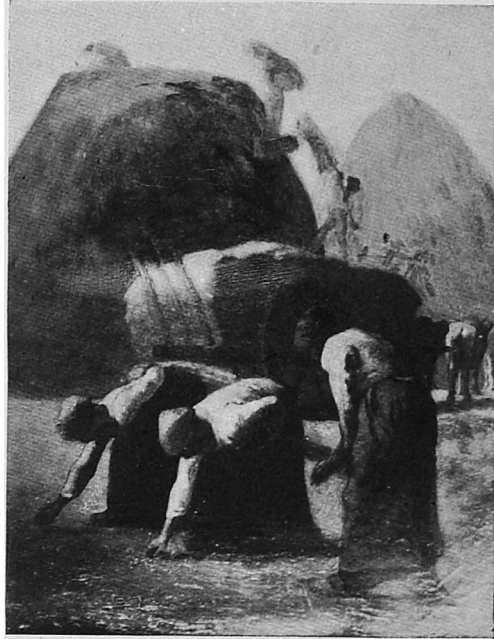
Probably Arthur B. Davies felt the pulsating glow of Venetian color when he painted his ever-delightful "Two-Step," but it was nevertheless as individual as anything in the galleries. William Sartain's "Arab School in Algiers" was not without its perfectly justifiable debt to Decamps; it was, in fact, what Gérôme might have been glad to do had his color sense been more than skin deep.

This might be continued, were it worth while. But it only shows that American painters have done what all other good artists have done, the world over—namely, taken the tradition handed down to them and worked it over more or less completely—just as Delacroix went back to Rubens, Ribot to Velasquez, Meissonier to the animated *genre* of the "Little"

Dutchmen. And as this tradition was entirely of the Old World, the task before American painters of adapting it to new conditions has not been easy.

When you found, in this Comparative Exhibition, men of powerful originality seeking to put off the European cloak, you came upon the evidence of a real struggle. Sometimes, as with George Fuller, Albert P. Ryder, Abbott Thayer, and even Winslow Homer, the thought or sensation to be expressed has so obsessed the artist that his whole abilities have been absorbed in setting forth the main theme, to the detriment of what must be vaguely called style.

Fuller was original, if any American ever was. His haunting figures live in the memory. They belong inevitably to their landscape settings. They kindle the imagination. They do not fail to establish in the sympathetic beholder the mood of the painter's poetic



THE GLEANERS

By J. F. Millet

Loaned by Mrs. Henry Codman Potter

dreaming. So with Abbott Thayer's quite different ideals—they are set forth robustly through his own forceful methods; Winslow Homer's magnificent bravura drives home to the observer the elemental power of the sea; Ryder's strange and rare genius (for genius



LES BOHEMIENS

By Narcisse-Virgile Diaz

Loaned by M. Durand-Ruel

it is) gives new meaning, fresh incisiveness, to the encounter of Siegfried and the Rhine maidens, and to the eerie horror of the Flying Dutchman.

In all these cases one feels the presence of a master, but of a master more or less remote from the world's ways, and by so much unwilling or unable to take heed to that final arrangement and digestion of his material that gives the last touch to consummate art. Even Wyant lets one feel too urgently this quality of idea-before-



externals in some of his best performances. Graces of expression must of course be second to vital thought, but they must also enter importantly into the art that is to live.

To me, American art, at the level of its best practitioners, seems at this stage: that the painters have ideas, and can express them,



LA CHARRETTE

By J. B. C. Corot

Loaned by Mrs. John T. Martin

and that their chief concern now should be, and is, the perfecting of the final beauty and symmetry of utterance, the least essential element, but still one absolutely needed.

And it has been done already, more than once, as this show testified. Has not Homer Martin's "Westchester Hills" the ripe perfection of means—elegance is too effeminate a word—that one finds in the Delacroix masterpiece, "Christ on the Lake of Genesareth," or the Corot "Cavalier sur une Route"? Here was something thoroughly American, wholly precious, something worthy of our respect and admiration.

SAMUEL SWIFT.